

AMENDMENT TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please amend the specification as follows with additions shown in underline and deletions shown as strikeouts:

Please amend the paragraph set forth on page 6, line 14 through page 7, line 10 as follows:

a1 ~~Figures 2~~ FIGS. 2A-2E, 2F1-2F2, 2G1-2G2 are screen prints of Auction.Yahoo.Com, and ~~Figures 3~~ FIGS. 3A, 3B1-3B3 and 3C1-3C5 are screen prints of AmazonAuction.Com, illustrating the two sites' identical formats to Ebay.Com. This universal Internet Auction Format is used with very minor variations on the theme in all state-of-the-art auction sites. Basically, the home pages of the auction sites contain a primary category listing, a "featured" listing, a "search" entry box, and some informational/promotional icons, textual descriptions, and links. Clicking on a category title on the primary category list brings the next page containing the listing of the next level of categories under that particular category, and a list of the "featured" items in that category. Clicking on one "featured" title brings information about that one particular "featured" item. Similarly, clicking on brief descriptions of promotional or informational entries and icons brings more detailed information about the entry. Clicking on a subcategory brings the listing of the next level subcategories and the "featured" items in that subcategory, until the particular category path is exhausted. Then, all items under that end category is listed over many web pages, accessible one web-page at a time, each containing more than one physical print page. Links to information of Items listed on a web page are accessible also one-item-at a time. Entering a search word or a search phrase brings a list of items that contain the word or phrase in the tagging header or in the description.

Please amend the section set forth on pages 9-12, titled "BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS" as follows:

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

~~FIG. 1.~~ FIGS. 1A-1B: Ebay.Com. Known-Art Auction Format. Only ONE link (one item)—can be clicked at any time on any page, as in all Internet web pages.

FIG. 1A shows the home page, with its 1st level categories listed on the left side of the page, the "featured" items listed in the middle of the page, and the "search" box at top center of the page.

FIG. 1B shows the next level categories under Antiques Category listed on the home page. The "featured" items are listed on the right side of the page.

a 2 FIGS. ~~4C~~ 1C1 to 1C9 is sent from the site server when the "Furniture" sub-category is clicked on Figure 1B.

FIGS. 1C1 to 1C6 are one-line descriptions of "featured" items in the Furniture category.

FIGS. 1C7 to 1C9 are the first of the 37 web-pages listings of 1,761 furniture items currently being auctioned on the site.

FIGS. 1D1 through 1D3 are detailed description and bidding status of the item listed on Figure 1C2, 6th item from the top: Super Turn of Century Oak Victorian Secretary.

FIG. 1E1 is the "Search" result for "bedroom furniture" in the Antiques category. There are only two items found.

FIG. 1E2 is the "Search" result for the same phrase "bedroom furniture in all categories, with 17 items found, including many Dollhouse bedroom sets.

~~FIG. 2:~~ FIGS. 2A-2E, 2F1-2F2, 2G1-2G2: Auction.Yahoo.Com. Known-Art Auction Format.

FIG. 2A is the home page with the 1st level category listing.

FIG. 2B lists subcategories under “Antiques & Collectables.” The page is sent from the site server when the “Antiques & Collectables” category on the home page 2A is clicked.

a 2 FIG. 2C lists subcategories under the “Furniture” category on Figure 2B. The page is sent from the site-server when the “Furniture” category on Figure 2B is clicked.

FIG. 2D: lists the 5 featured items on the top of the page, and a total of 16 items in the “Living Room Set” category. The page is sent from the site server, when the “Living Room Set” category on Figure 2C is clicked.

FIG. 2E: shows the “Armoires” subcategory under the “Furniture” category listed on Figure 2C. There are a total of 12 items. The 5 “featured” items are shown on the top of the page.

FIGS. 2F1 and 2F2: ~~The~~ show the “Chests” subcategory under the “Furniture” Category listed on Figure 2C.

FIGS. 2G1 and 2G2: ~~The~~ show the description of an item listed on Figure 2F1, the Oriental Hope Chest. Only one item can be clicked and reviewed at a time.

~~FIG. 3:~~ FIGS. 3A, 3B1-3B3 and 3C1-3C5: The Auctions.Amazon.Com. Known-Art Auction Format.

FIG. 3A: is the home page, listing the 1st level categories on the left side, and 6 “featured” items in the middle of the page.

FIGS. 3B1 through 3B3: lists the second level categories under the “Antiques” category, and the “Featured Auctions” in the “Antiques” category.

FIGS. 3C1 to 3C5: lists the first 50 items out of a total of 464 items in the “Books & Manuscripts” category under the “Antiques” category. Information can only be gotten one item, one link at a time, as in all Internet sites.

FIG. 4: FIGS. 4A-4D: An example of an On-Line Auction presentation implemented with the current invention.

FIG. 4A: The “featured”, and “search,” or “category” browsing results are shown in a graphical array, with multiple-select capabilities. The “upcoming” auctions are announced in a cycling or stationary (scrolled to view) margin-strip at the right side. The “present” auctions are presented in rows

a ~ Each row of the array can advance to left, back to right, continually move (GO button) to show more items, or stop, at command by clicking on the command buttons at the left margin of the row. The “upcoming” column on the right has similar functions. The movement for the column is up-down movement.

In this particular presentation example, we have chosen 3 categories and the “featured.” The same method and apparatus can present items of the same category, or the subcategories within a category, for example, separating sports cars of different manufacturer.

FIG. 4B: The screen shot of the Auction home-page screen at some time later. Due to exercising the moving functions, some items have changed positions on the array, some items have left the screen, and some items not shown in 4A appear on the screen.

FIG. 4C: The selected items from Figures 4A and 4B appear on a monitoring screen. The screen is automatically tracked/updated by synchronizing with the server data at user programmable intervals. Object that should be seen from all sides has an "On" button in a portion of its still image. Clicking the "ON" button turns on the Virtual Reality with automated rotation as well as mouse driven rotation features. The "ON" button can be replaced by "VR" or any other form that representing turning on "Virtual Reality." Detailed information for each monitored object can be called individually by clicking on the "Detail" button, or selectively and collectively by clicking the "select" boxes, and submitting requests to the server after completing the selection process. The object positioning in the array can be sorted with various criteria at user request or default setting. The "alert" can also be programmed, for example, to surround "End Time" box with small blinking stars, or any other attention causing signal, to signal the end of "open" auction within 30 minutes (or an hour), and blinking red stars for "My bid" button when "my bid" is out bid.

FIG. 4D: Selecting objects monitored in screen Figure 4C for viewing detailed information and access bidding apparatus collectively, would bring this screen after submitting the selection. In this example, The Egli Ucelli landscape painting, the Jaguar S-series, and the Algarve rug are selected.

FIG. 5: ~~An~~ an example of the "Live" Auction Format of the Present Invention.

Please amend the section, on pages 13-19, titled "DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION" as set forth below.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

a 3 The present invention relates to novel methods and apparatus for conducting, presenting, monitoring, and tracking auctions on-line, for pure Internet auctions, and for real-time linking to physical auctions. The "current" auction objects are presented in moving graphical arrays 20A, 20B, 20C and 20D that can be sorted by rows 22A, 22B, 22C and 22D or columns, and moved bi-directionally to show more items than the computer screen size can accommodate, or stopped to select individual items to obtain further information, or to be monitored and tracked. The "up coming" objects that are soon to be "open" for bidding are shown on a separate strip 24 on the screen. The strip 24 and the sorted rows 22A, 22B, 22C and 22D or columns can be commanded to "cycle" onto the screen continually to display objects beyond the screen. The moving strip 24 can also be activated to step in both directions, and stopped for detailed view or selection for monitoring, tracking, or to obtain further information. The displaying and selection method and apparatus can also be used for displaying catalogs and other e-commerce channels and services.

Selected objects from different categories, or even different sites can be monitored and tracked on the same screen.

Self-rotating, automated Virtual Reality is used to display three-dimensional objects. Split screen 60 (FIG. 5) allows video broadcasting, narrow casting or streaming of "live auction" events, or fashion catwalk events 60A alongside detailed images of auctioned objects 60B, their descriptions, and the bidding entry form, as well as the running strip cataloguing the upcoming lots/items for auction or catwalk.

The methods and apparatus disclosed in this application can also be use in other types of on-line object and catalogue displays and other E-commerce channels, mechanisms, and services in addition to the auction format.

a3 The present invention presents objects presently open for auction in each category on a graphical array 20A, 20B, 20C or 20D, with the “up coming auctions” running on a margin strip 24. A time stamp 26 signifies the time the information is loaded to the computer at its latest synchronization/up-date. The array 20A, 20B, 20C or 20D can be sorted by user specified or default criteria in columns or rows. Command buttons 28A, 28B, 28C, 28D or 28E providing options allowing viewers to start, or stop the cycling, use the scroll button to scroll up or down, or left or right, to see more items. The bidder/viewer selects interested objects from the array 20A, 20B, 20C or 20D of either the same category, or from different categories, or even from different sites, and/or the interested “upcoming” objects from the margin strip 24. The “auction wizard” of the current invention fetches the detailed information and enlarged graphics of the selected items from the site databases, and composes a personalized auction monitor screen (FIG. 4C) for the bidder/viewer. The screen is automatically updated with new status, at user programmable intervals. If the bidder/viewer’s computer is disconnected from the server, the synchronization occurs automatically upon reconnection.

Differentiated level of selections can be made, and the array presentation can be sorted by category, or with other criteria of differentiation. “Alert” is programmed to user selectable criteria, such as closing time, outbid, etc.: Default setting can be provided, for example, to alert closing time in one hour or less, or outbid by others.

Dropping items from monitoring screen (FIG. 4C) can also be programmed to criteria, such as highest bid going beyond a certain price, or successful final bid of another similar item, etc. Monitoring is automatically dropped when closing is over, and status sent to “closed auction report” folder.

Automated 3D Virtual Reality presentation is used to display three-dimensional objects, such as sculptures, cars, lamps, or furniture, revolving on the screen automatically. “ON” Buttons 40 are provided to the VR presentation for viewer to elect using the mouse to rotate the object, or to resume the automated rotation. A “VR,” The “ON” button 40 is provided on still images of three-dimensional objects for activating Virtual Reality presentation upon clicking.

a³ “Split Screen” 60 accommodates broadcasting, narrow casting, and streaming video 60A for viewing the live auction events, alongside the web images, VR or 3D presentations of the object 60B, detailed textual descriptions, and the online “bidding” mechanism 60C, for linking “live auction” sessions to the on-line auction network.

An example of an On-Line Auction presentation implemented with the current invention is illustrated in ~~FIG. 4~~ FIGS. 4A-4D. FIG. 4A: shows “search,” or “category” browsing results, and the “featured” items in a graphical array, with multiple-select capabilities. The “upcoming” auctions are announced in a cycling or stationary (scrolled to view) margin-strip 24 at the right side. The “present” auctions are presented in rows 22A, 22B, 22C and 22D, and sorted in rows according to category criteria.

A set of command buttons 28A, 28B, 28C and 28D are placed at the left margin of each row 22A, 22B, 22C and 22D, respectively, to enable each row 22A, 22B, 22C and 22D of the array to advance to the left, or back to the right by pressing the mouse button on the arrows 30 or

31, or to continually move for showing more items beyond the screen by clicking on the “GO” button 32, or stop at command by clicking on the “STOP” button 33. The “Other” button 34 allows the viewer to select to view items from other categorization. The “upcoming” column on the right (strip 24) has similar functions. The movement for the column is up-down movement via arrows 30’ and 31’ instead of the left-right for the rows of “present auctions.”

In this particular presentation example, we have chosen 3 categories and the “featured” items for the rows. Other criteria can be used, such as displaying subcategory items from the same category, for example, sports cars of different manufacturer, or displaying same category items sorting by ending time, etc.

Each item on the array is selectable. The viewer can select as many items from the array as desired for monitoring, for detailed information, or for bidding. When the selection process is completed, the viewer “submits” the selection by clicking the mouse button on the “Submit” button 37 located at the bottom of the screen.

FIG. 4B shows the FIG. 4A screen at some later time. Due to exercising the moving functions, some items have changed positions on the array, some items have left the screen, and some items not shown in FIG. 4A appear on the screen.

FIG. 4C: ~~Displays~~ displays the viewer-selected items from FIGS. 4A and 4B on a monitoring screen. The screen is automatically tracked/updated by synchronizing with the server data at user programmed or default intervals. Three-dimensional object that should be seen from all sides has an “On” button 40 in a portion of its still image. Clicking the “ON” button 40 turns on the Virtual Reality with automated rotation as well as mouse driven rotation features. The “ON” button 40 can be replaced by “VR” or any other form that representing turning on “Virtual

Reality.” Detailed information for each monitored object can be called individually by clicking on the “Detailed” button 45A, or selectively and collectively by clicking the “select” boxes 45B, and submitting requests to the server after completing the selection process. The object positioning in the array can be sorted with various criteria at user request or default setting. The “alert” can also be programmed, for example, to surround “End Time” box 43B with small blinking stars, or any other attention causing signal, to signal the end of “open” auction within 30 minutes (or an hour), and blinking red stars for “My bid” button 45C when “my bid” is out bid.

Q³ Selecting objects monitored in screen FIG. 4C for viewing further detailed information and access-bidding apparatus collectively would bring the screen 50 shown in Figure 4D after submitting the selection. In this example, The Egli Ucelli landscape painting, the Jaguar S-series, and the Algarve rug are selected. The Jaguar has Virtual Reality presentation, activated by clicking on the “ON” button 40. The column 24B in the middle are textual descriptions for the items, and the Auction bids column 24C to the right is where the auction status is presented, updated, and where bids (in “Bid Amount” box 56) can be entered. The membership ID number 52 only has to be entered once. The scroll bars 54 indicates there is more information in the box than what is shown. When the cursor is moved into the frame, where only partial information is shown, the full frame would pop-up.

FIG. 5: ~~Shows~~ shows an example of the “Live” Auction Format of the Present Invention. The 2 boxes at left are real-time, live streaming, broadcasting, or narrowcasting of live scenes at the physical auctions. The upper portion of the second column 60B from the left displays either still image of a 2-D object, or still image of a 3-D object, with Virtual Reality option upon clicking on the still image. The upper portion of the 3rd column 60C includes bidding screen

62A and description screen 62B. The lower portion 62C displays the next item to be auctioned, and the right column 60D displays the upcoming objects after the next auction in their time order. Bringing the cursor onto an image, the brief description is shown in a floating box. Clicking on the image brings detailed descriptions.

The present invention is implemented using software which can be written in many programming languages, or implemented with many web-page generation tools. The present invention can be used on a global or local computer network, on a personal computer, on viewable storage media such as a CD ROM, on a wireless telephone, on a wireless personal assistant such as a Palm Pilot®, or on any type of wired or wireless device that enables digitally stored information to be viewed on a display device. Also, information displayed and viewed using the present invention can be printed, stored to other storage medium, and electronically mailed to third parties.

Numerous modifications to and alternative embodiments of the present invention will be apparent to those skilled to the art in view of the foregoing description. Accordingly, this description is to be construed as illustrative only and is for the purpose of teaching those skilled in the art the best mode of carrying out the invention. Details of the structure may be varied substantially without departing from the spirit of the invention and the exclusive use of all modifications which come within the scope of the appended claims is reserved.